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ABSTRACT

A syllabus for teacher training in FLES (foreign languages in the elementary school) methodology based on language teaching theory and research findings, current practice, and a survey of university faculty is presented and discussed. The syllabus was designed for implementation at Ohio State University. First, a literature review and an analysis of current texts used throughout the country in FLES methods courses are offered to establish what experts believe to be the primary characteristics, skills, and concepts that a FLES teacher should possess. Results of a mailing to university faculty currently teaching a FLES methods course are presented. The four responses are detailed. An informal objective needs assessment involving two FLES teachers, a curriculum coordinator, an immersion teacher, and three teacher trainees is also described. In this process, the participants reflected on topics and techniques for inclusion in a FLES methods course, based on experience and perceived areas of need in teaching children. Finally, a syllabus is proposed, consisting of a statement of goals and objectives, evaluation methods and criteria, assignments for undergraduate and graduate students, and a class meeting schedule. A brief bibliography is also appended. (MSE)

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Syllabus For A FLES Methods Course

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In recent years, emphasis within our profession has been on ESL, adult second language acquisition, and core programs in our secondary schools and universities. Although research has substantiated the need for a long sequence of classes in the target language to insure proficiency, only minimal gains have been realized to expand foreign languages to the elementary school level. The desire on the part of a handful of educators to promote FLES (foreign language in the elementary school) to its rightful place of prominence prompted the birth of the annual Second Language Acquisition By Children Conference (SLAC). This past November, I attended the priorities session of the SLAC conference as well as two days' of workshops on language learning in children. Those of us affiliated with a university convened to discuss issues regarding teacher training and certification, the sharing of syllabuses for FLES methods courses, and funding to underwrite FLES programs on a national basis.

This project will address the issue of teacher training in FLES methodology. In the first section, a review of the literature regarding FLES teacher training is presented. Current texts used throughout the country in FLES methods courses are also reviewed to establish what experts believe to be the major topics of familiarity, skills, and concepts

a FLES teacher should possess. Secondly, results of a mailing to university instructors and professors currently teaching a FLES methods course are discussed. In the third section, I supplement the above findings based on personal contacts in the profession and my own experiences of teaching in an elementary school setting. Lastly, a syllabus based on the input from all the sources above is proposed for implementation spring quarter of 1990 here at Ohio State and to share with colleagues in the profession through ERIC.

The National FLES Commission in conjunction with the AATF under the direction of Gladys Lipton (1988) posits a list of essential competencies for an elementary school foreign language teacher. These include: (1) near-native proficiency for immersion teachers and functional proficiency for other FLES teachers, (2) knowledge of the target culture, (3) knowledge of the application of linguistics, (4) knowledge of children's literature of the target culture, (5) knowledge of elementary and middle school curriculum and methodologies, (6) knowledge of child psychology and child development, (7) knowledge of first and second language acquisition principles, (8) the ability to work effectively with children, (9) knowledge of the rationale for FLES, (10) the ability to establish rapport with colleagues, parents, and children,

(11) skill in classroom management and conflict resolution coupled with an understanding of the American elementary school setting, and (12) be conversant with research relevant to the teaching of foreign languages in the elementary school. For native speakers of the target language, the Commission also recommends near-native proficiency in English.

Two camps prevail in the discussion of teacher qualifications. The first underscores the importance of the teacher's ability to relate instruction to his/her students and to understand the cognitive abilities of children (Hollerbach 1985). Koster (1986) provides evidence that the most important factor of education during the first stages of foreign language acquisition is the process of teaching, not the teacher's background in the subject matter. Professional skill outweighs linguistic competence for Koster.

The second view emphasizes the language proficiency of the teacher. Bernhardt and Hammadou (1987) found language proficiency the main theme in over 30% of publications on teacher education and an adjunct theme in 17% of them. In her ERIC Digest on Elementary School Foreign Language Programs Reeves (1989) also establishes near-native fluency as the most desirable criteria for a good FLES teacher.

Rhodes and Oxford (1988) confirm what our profession has known for

quite a while: very few institutions of higher learning offer solid course-work in the area of teaching foreign languages in the elementary school. The majority of FLES teachers are usually language majors trained in secondary methods.

Turning now to the major texts used in FLES methods courses it is evident that priorities in teacher background and skills have begun to emerge. Curtain and Pesola (1988) cite Myriam Met's list in their book Language and Children- Making the Match. The effective elementary school teacher should be prepared to do the following: (1) understand and like children, (2) be skilled in the management of the elementary school classroom by (a) creating an affective and physical environment in which learning happens and (b) understanding and applying research on school and teacher effectiveness, (3) know the elementary school curriculum, approaching instruction from a holistic, integrated, content-based perspective and selecting and sequencing activities that are appropriate to the developmental needs of the child, (4) teach second language reading and writing to learners who are developing first language literacy skills, (5) understand the precepts of communicative language teaching and employ a wide variety of strategies to implement these precepts, (6) use the target language fluently with a high degree of cultural

appropriateness and (7) draw on an excellent understanding of the target culture especially as it relates to children, including children's literature.

In her book Practical Handbook to Elementary Foreign Language Programs (1988) Lipton lists 15 topics discussed in the University of Maryland/Baltimore County FLES methods course which reflect the AATF Guidelines mentioned above but also cover specific techniques for teaching the four skills of language learning. Other areas covered in the course include the needs of elementary school youngsters, materials selection, development of lesson plans, and techniques for evaluating student progress. Lipton advocates periodic inservice workshops to keep teachers abreast of current developments in the field.

Kennedy and De Lorenzo (1985) devote a chapter to teacher training in their book Complete Guide to Exploratory Foreign Language Programs. The chapter gives a complete syllabus for a FLEX program designed to introduce FLEX teachers to the content and methodologies of a FLEX course through first-hand experience. Among the essential characteristics of a FLEX teacher, the authors list: (1) breadth of linguistic and cultural knowledge, (2) skill in utilizing a variety of grouping techniques and classroom activities, and (3) training as a foreign language major with a specialization in 2 languages or at least some familiarity with a second

or third foreign language.

Having reviewed the texts currently employed in FLES methods courses and having discussed the conclusions reached in the literature, I shall now focus on the results of a mailing undertaken to determine what other FLES methods instructors deem the most important topics for discussion in the preparation of future teachers. My letter (appendix) was sent to 16 institutions of higher learning around the country known to offer methods courses in the teaching of foreign languages (list compiled by Nancy Rhodes at the Center for Applied Linguistics.) Only 4 of the 16 responded.

Gladys Lipton of the University of Maryland/Baltimore Campus advocates the importance of being able to verbalize the rationale for FLES to colleagues, parents, and administrators. This necessitates an understanding of second language acquisition in children based on research. Other topics of importance for preservice teachers were mentioned in the book review section of this study.

Dr. Roma Hoff of the University of Wisconsin/Eau Claire apparently feels that the Curtain and Pesola book offers a sufficient formation for FLES teachers as her syllabus contains no elaboration on topics presented by the text authors. No other readings were mentioned in the syllabus.

Professor Lucette Fogel of the University of Dayton must teach a combined FLES/secondary methods course. She writes that she is extremely pressed for time since there are certain generic education department topics which must be covered as well as the foreign language-specific topics. Fogel uses the Omaggio and the Curtain and Pesola books plus supplemental readings to elaborate on the following topics: (1) curriculum and planning, (2) the role of context, (3) error correction, (4) listening and reading, (5) speaking, (6) writing, (7) culture, (8) testing, and (9) media and technology. This syllabus seems to reflect a discrete skill orientation rather than a whole language approach to learning. This is probably attributable to the combined secondary/elementary focus of her students.

In contrast to Fogel's syllabus, Dr. Christian Faltis of the University of Nevada/Reno submitted a syllabus which reflects a much more integrated, holistic approach to language teaching. In his course entitled ESL Instruction in the Elementary Schools, the following topics are discussed: (1) integrated model, (2) setting up your classroom for real language-oral and written discourse, (3) adapting teacher talk for whole group instruction, (4) adapting interactional talk for whole group instruction, (5) teacher-led exchanges in small groups, (6) introducing ESL

children to literacy experiences, (7) shared book experiences, (8) extended reading and expository writing, (9) cooperative learning, (10) reaching out to the community, and (11) becoming an ESL advocate.

Since the results of my mailing were somewhat dismaying, I decided to conduct an informal objective needs analysis with 2 FLES teachers, a curriculum coordinator, an immersion teacher, and 3 students enrolled in my course this coming spring. The purpose of this investigation was to have the aforementioned parties reflect on what topics and techniques to include in a FLES methods course based on their experience and their perceived areas of shortcoming in regard to teaching children.

Both of the FLES teachers were enrolled in 617 last year. Both place a heavy, positive emphasis on the Curtain & Pesola's book. Activities which these two found most useful were: (1) making a communicative activity really communicative instead of just creative and interactive, (2) observing elementary school teachers, (3) creating a thematic web and fantasy experience, (4) peer teaching, (5) interviewing an expert in the field and reporting findings to the class, and (6) using language functions in the preparation of lessons.

There were also some areas in which these two felt more emphasis should have been placed. Topics meriting more consideration include: (1)

establishing routines and discipline, (2) understanding elementary school children- what they are capable of doing, their cognitive development, how much they are able to tolerate in a single lesson, etc. One of the teachers also had a great interest in learning styles and right brain/left brain considerations in learning. She also felt very strongly that grades 6,7,and 8 should be considered elementary grades and that the characteristics of this age group should not be omitted from a FLES course. It should be noted that both these teachers have been active in the classroom for at least 10 years, although not necessary on the elementary level.

Lori Winne, Assistant Director of Foreign Languages for the Toledo Public Schools has been instrumental in materials development for her school system's FLEX program. When I placed an order for her materials, I also requested her input regarding topics for inclusions in a FLES methods course. She responded with the following 3 suggestions: (1) newer methods such as the Natural Approach and Total Physical Response, (2) activities dealing with cooperative learning and small group learning, and (3) ideas or strategies on how to develop content-based materials, i.e. developing lesson plans using the same concepts taught in math, science, or language arts in the FLES classroom.

Based on converstaions with 3 students enrolled in my course for this coming spring, I have been reminded to assume varying degrees of expertise regarding second language acquisition theory and techniques for classroom use. One of the interviewees had not heard of "communicative competence" or "proficiency-based instruction." It is evident from this admission that a concise, yet thorough review of innovations in thinking in our field should be one of the first topics covered in my course so all students and the instructor establish a common pool of background knowledge in reference to which the rest of the topics may relate.

The other 2 students come from an ESL background. Their main concern lay with gaining a deeper understanding of children in general and children's language learning in particular. Both of these candidates felt fairly comfortable regarding their knowledge of topics already included in the texts for the course. They are more desirous of readings which relate to children's growth and development.

The immersion teacher also took this course a few years ago. She reiterated the others' praise of the text and the topics in general. (The book was not available to her during her methods class but is reading she finds indispensible.) It is evident in talking with her that she possesses a distinct advantage in her formation over all of the other teachers (and

the instructor). She has been trained as an elementary school teacher with heavy emphasis on child development and social studies,science, math, and language arts strands of elementary methods courses. She feels exceedingly confident in her abilities to integrate language and content based on the developmental readiness of her students. Having accepted student teachers and methods people from OSU, she had one suggestion regarding topics for 617: discipline and routines in the elementary classroom.

Having considered input from a number of outside sources regarding important topics for a FLES methods course, I would like to conclude the research portion of this paper with a closer look at my own experience. I feel that my backgroud will be representative of a goodly number of my students in 617 for I was trained as a secondary teacher with a 4-skills approach to language teaching with culture thrown in as an after-thought.

I have also taught elementary school PTA classes in foreign language, the summer session for Columbus School for Girls' enrichment program for elementary boys and girls, and 3 year olds through 8th graders for a year as a FLES French teacher. Yet I felt an urgent need to return to the university to supplement my experience with theory regarding second language learning and child development. The activities suggested in the

texts for 617 could be implemented with any learners. It is a thorough understanding of the child that facilitates the use of these techniques. It was understanding the "why" before the "how" that has helped me. It was capitalizing on whole-language approaches, literacy experiences based on the children's lives, and creation of fantasy experiences that showed me a better way than slavish reliance on the grammatical syllabus. It was numerous hours spent with immersion teachers and their students that made me realize how powerful a tool integrating content and language can be.

From the sources mentioned throughout this project, it is possible to identify a great number of issues regarding the competencies of FLES teachers. Table 1 presents a list of all the suggestions from the texts, the review of the literature,the mailing responses, and the interviewees.

Most of the skills and topics delineated are appropriate content for a university methods course. However, there are several abilities which are beyond the scope of a FLES methods course. It is assumed that the future teacher's linguistic capabilities and knowledge of the target culture, including children's literature, have already been developed to an acceptable level for being a FLES teacher.

near- native proficiency for immersion teachers.
functional proficiency for other FLES teachers.
knowledge of the target culture.
knowledge of the application of linguistics.
    using language functions to help create lessons and activities.
knowledge of children's literature in the target culture.
knowledge of elementary and middle school curricula and methodologies.
    approaching instruction from a holistic, intergrated, content-based perspective: shared book experiences, whole language learning, language experiences, fantasy experiences, (Lipton's) 4 skill areas, the role of context, thematic webs, semantic mapping, The Natural Approach, Total Physical Response.
knowledge of child psychology and child development.
    needs of children (Lipton).
knowledge of first and second language acquisition principles.
    route/rate, teaching reading and writing to learners developing reading and writing skills in L1, teacher talk.
ability to work effectively with children.
knowledge of the rationale for FLES-advantages.
conversant with research related to FLES.
    history, communictive competence, proficiency movement, comprehensible input, ACTFL guidelines, articulation with h.s.
ability to establish rapport with colleagues, parents, children.
skill in classroom management and conflict resolution.
    creating an affective and physical environment in which learning happens, grouping techniques (FLEX), cooperative learning, peer teaching, small groups, understanding and applying research on school and teacher effectiveness.
understanding of the American elementary and middle school setting.
development of lesson plans.
    selection and sequencing of activities, materials appropriate to the developmental needs of the child, making activities really communicative- not just creative and interactive: information gap.
evaluating student progress/ error correction.
media/technology.

Table 1. Characteristics and Skills of a FLES Teacher.

As a culminating activity for this project, I will propose a syllabus for the FLES methods course at OSU. It is not my intention to start from scratch, but instead to modify the existing syllabus based on the input obtained from all of my preceding sources.

Teaching Foreign (Second) Languages in the Elementary School
The Ohio State University Educational Studies 617

Deborah Wilburn
Office: 060 Ramseyer
Mailbox: 249 Arps
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Class:Wed. 4:00-6:30
office hour: 6:30-7:30
home phone: [redacted]

Texts: Curtain and Pesola: Languages and Children-Making the Match.

Kennedy and De Lorenzo: Complete Guide to Exploratory Foreign Language Programs.

Lipton: Practical Handbook to Elementary Foreign Language Programs.

Kinko's Packet.

GOALS

This course is intended to meet the needs of ESL and Foreign Language teachers interested in teaching in an elementary or middle school setting. Content of the course reflects an in-depth study of skills and areas of expertise necessary for the successful elementary teacher.

Building on your previous knowledge of the teaching/learning process, we will explore together how to gear instruction to the young learner through lectures, peer teaching, readings, and guest presentations. Course assignments, whether prepared individually, with a partner, or by a learning group are designed to contribute to the knowledge of the entire class. The quality of the course in large measure depends on the quality of individual and group contributions.

With an understanding of the principles of second language acquisition, child psychology and the cognitive development of children, and methodologies consonant with whole language learning, we will become skillful in structuring learning experiences for children.

OBJECTIVES

1) To differentiate approaches used in FLES, FLEX, immersion and ESL programs.

2) To be conversant with research related to FLES and to be able to discuss the rationale for FLES.

3) To familiarize participants with first and second language acquisition principles.

4) To identify characteristics and interests of elementary and middle school learners.

5) To structure content-based and whole language instruction based on knowledge of the elementary or middle school curriculum and methodologies.

6) To become skillful in the development and execution of lesson plans and language experiences through description/demonstration of various teaching/learning strategies appropriate for elementary classes.

7) To create an affective and physical environment conducive to learning based on skill in classroom management, grouping strategies, and conflict resolution.

8) To develop a repetoire of techniques and materials appropriate for elementary and middle school learners.

9) To develop a means of assessing/evaluating student learning consistent with program objectives and learner characteristics.

EVALUATION

The final grade will be based on:

1) Attendance and active participation. 10%
2) Completion and quality of assignments:
    a. game/learning activity. 10%

b. lesson plan incorporating all 4 skills and possibly culture. 20%
c. creating a content-based unit through thematic webbing. 20%
d. planning for a reading lesson through the language experience approach. 10%
e. creating a fantasy experience. 10%

3) final exam. 20%

Graduate students will also be required to interview an expert in the field and report findings to class. (20%)

ASSIGNMENTS

a. game/learning activity. (individual assignment)

Develop or borrow (with appropriate references) a game/activity to do with us. You may also choose to create a computer activity. On a one-page handout, provide the following:

1. State type of class and grade level. (Immersion, grade 5)
2. learning objectives: how activity reinforces basic concepts that are part of the curriculum.
3. Give language functions practiced.
4. Describe game/activity.
5. Provide a script for the teacher's role in introducing and conducting the game and demonstrate how the teacher surrounds the activity with language to provide comprehensible input.
6. Ensure a communicative orientation to game by consulting Curtain & Pesola pg. 120.

b. lesson plan. (individual assignment)

Develop a 30 minute lesson plan based on concepts you have discussed with your learning group (see Thematic Web below). Pay particular attention to the match of your activities to the stage of cognitive development of the students. Be sure to include some small group or pair activity. Prepare materials and visuals. Include a means of checking for comprehension.

Refer to Chapter 10 in Curtain & Pesola, pg 115 in Lipton, pg 97

Kennedy & De Lorenzo.

1. State type of class and grade.
2. State objectives.
3. Identify prerequisite learning.
4. Identify new subject matter.
5. State procedures giving sequence and description of each activity.
6. Identify language functions.
7. Materials and visuals.

Although formal evaluation will not be included within the 30 minute lesson plan, give a description, with examples, to demonstrate how you would subsequently evaluate this learning.

Refer to Chapter11 Curtain & Pesola and Chapter 8 Lipton.

c. content-based unit through thematic webbing. (with learning group)

Develop a list of at least six activities on a selected theme. There should be an experiential component (e.g. arts and crafts, physical activity, music and motion, science, etc) and a linguistic component. Describe each activity briefly and indicate the skills and concepts that would be developed. Plan to present three of the activities to the class.

Refer to Curtain & Pesola Chapter 7, Lipton pg 70-76, De Lorenzo and Kennedy-any program mentioned.

1. 3 activities developed.
2. 3 activities envisioned.
3. experiential component
4. language activities.
5. language functions.

d. the language-experience approach to reading. (individual project)

Describe how you would create a reading experience which incorporates all the communication skills of speaking, listening, writing and reading. The idea behind this assignment is that children will be able to read printed words if these words stem from their everyday experience and language. Be able to describe briefly to class.

Refer to Curtain & Pesola pg. 139.

1. Describe the activity the class will speak/write about.
2. Describe procedures to elicit language from children and the steps used to arrive at a written product.

e. fantansy experience (planned with your learning group)

Choose a feature of the target culture that you feel would be suitable for the development of a classroom fantasy experience. Follow the guidelines in Chapter 9 of Curtain & Pesola. Be prepared to explain and demonstrate for the class. Provide a short summary of the activity for the instructor indicating objectives, materials, and procedures.

1. objectives.
2. materials.
3. procedures.

Graduate students INTERVIEWING AN EXPERT

Depending on your area of interest, arrange to interview (tape record) an expert and report your findings to the class. Begin by consulting Chapter 5 of Curtain & Pesola to help identify the theoretical background for your question. Why is this issue important? What are the current lines of thinking? Cite various language acquisition theorists or practitioners on the topic of interest. Summarize the main findings. Synthesize the concepts you found most meaningful. Then react to the findings by agreeing, disagreeing, stating their interest value, ease of pedagogical application, etc .

Below are possible suggestions. Please clear topic with instructor.

Foreign Language instruction in the middle school. Diane Ging, Supervisor, Columbus Public Schools. (365-5034)

ESL Program for Elementary Children. Diane Ging

Differences in learner characteristics, learning styles, and cognitive processing. Dr. Marlin Languis, OSU 292-8318.

Stories, books, and poems in the FLES class. Dr. Virginia Allen 292-9133.

Art Education and the foreign language classroom. Dr. Kenneth Marantz. OSU 292-7183.

Second language experiences in the real world: Music and motion. Dr. Joan Lehr. OSU 292-7940.

Second language experiences in the real world: Science characteristics of fifth and seventh grade learners. Dr. Robert Cunningham. OSU 292-8031.

Evaluating FLES students' performance. Nancy Rhodes, The Center For Applied Linguistics. (202) 429-9292.

Gladys Lipton, any subject dealing with FLES, University of Maryland, Baltimore Campus, (301) 455-2109 ask for Dept. of Modern Languages and Linguistics.

Carol Pesola, Concordia College, (218) 299-3911 or 4511.

Immersion teachers or principles at Gladstone or Kenwood.

CLASS MEETING SCHEDULE

3/28 Organization of course, formation of learning groups.
Overview of program types. Historic perspective on FLES.
Videos from immersion schools.
Readings: Curtain & Pesola pgs 1-57
Lipton pgs 1-54
Kennedy & De Lorenzo pgs 1-52
Kinko's Section 1

4/4 Second language acquisition theory. Linguistics.
Characteristics of elementary and middle school learners.
Guest teachers: Donna George, FLES teacher.
Readings: Curtain & Pesola pgs 59-70
Kinko's Section 2

4/11 Content-based instruction. Learning from the immersion experience.
Guest teacher: immersion. video, K Gladstone.
Readings: Curtain & Pesola pgs 71-115
Lipton pgs 59-77
kinko's Section 3

4/18 Creating an environment for communiction.
Classroom management.
Thematic webbing: work with partners.
Presentation: grad students' interviews.
Readings: Curtain & Pesola pgs 117-146, 283-308.
Lipton pgs 78-131
Kennedy & De Lorenzo pgs 53-85
Kinko's Section 4

4/25 Lesson Planning
Cooperative learning
Presentation: grad students' interviews.
Thematic webbing: work with partners.
Readings: Curtain & Pesola pgs 165-182, 235-271
Lipton pgs 177-183
Kennedy & De Lorenzo pgs 86-110
Kinko's Section 5
Prepare webs and lesson plans

5/2 <u>Presentation of webs and lesson plan based on webs.</u>
Choosing and creating classroom activities.
Readings: Kinko's Section 6
Curtain & Pesola pgs 199-234
Prepare game/activity

5/9 Teaching reading through language experiences.
Presentation: grad students' interviews.
<u>Presentation of game/activity</u>
Prepare language experience for reading.

5/19 Presentation of language experience for reading.
Evaluation. Error correction.
Readings: Curtain & Pesola pgs 183-197
Lipton pgs 132- 150

5/23 Experiencing culture in the classroom.
Presentation: grad students' interviews or remaining games/ reading.
Work on fantasy experience with group.
Readings: Curtain & Pesola pgs 147-163, 271-279.
Prepare fantasy experiences.

5/30 Presentations: Any remaining from previous classes.
Present fantasy experiences.
Characteristics of a good FLES teacher.
Readings: Kinko's Section 7
Study sheet for final

6/7 5:00 p.m. Final Exam

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